

Britain expels 28 Iraqi diplomats

LONDON (AP) — Britain is expelling 28 diplomats from the Iraqi embassy in London, the Foreign Office said Sunday. Iraqi Ambassador Azim Al Salloum was summoned to the Foreign Office and told to reduce his staff from 32 to four within 24 hours, said a Foreign Office spokeswoman, who requested anonymity. "He was informed that in view of the current state of relations, the level of staff required at the Iraqi embassy was unjustified," the Foreign Office spokeswoman said. She said the Iraqi diplomats' families have a week to leave. The last diplomat at the British embassy in Baghdad left Iraq on Saturday. The consul general, Chris Segar, travelled overnight to Amman, and was expected back in Britain within the next couple of days, the spokeswoman said. Britain expelled 73 Iraqis, including eight Iraqi embassy employees, on Jan. 3. The Foreign Office said the expulsions were a defensive move against Iraqi threats to attack targets in the West.

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Bush: Gorbachev still backs U.N. approach

WASHINGTON (R) — President George Bush said Sunday that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev had confirmed Moscow's support for the U.N. approach in the Gulf. "I believe the Soviet support for the United Nations approach is solid and firm and President Gorbachev told me that not so long ago," Bush told reporters. Asked about news reports from Baghdad Sunday that Iraq would not withdraw from Kuwait by the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline, Bush said: "It doesn't surprise me but they are making a tremendous mistake." Answering Americans who have demonstrated against any possible war in the Gulf, Bush replied: "I say we've got to do what we have to do and the Congress has affirmed that position. One of the arguments that people made was, get Congress involved... both houses of the Congress affirmed the policies of his government."

Ben Bella arrives here

AMMAN (J.T.) — Former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella arrived in Amman Sunday to meet Iraqi leaders to discuss the Gulf crisis. Ben Bella visited Iraq and Jordan shortly after the crisis began with Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait. Ben Bella might meet His Majesty King Hussein before flying to Baghdad, according to sources quoted by Reuters.

Iraq lets former Kuwaiti envoy leave

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq has allowed the former Kuwaiti envoy to leave Baghdad more than five months after his country was invaded by Iraqi troops, an Arab diplomat said. Ambassador Ibrahim Jassim Al Bahi was allowed to leave for Jordan a few days ago after an appeal made by His Majesty King Hussein, diplomatic sources said. Al Bahi was banned from travel after the invasion and was deprived of his diplomatic status. His children were allowed to leave last September for school in Europe, and he was free to move about without any restrictions in Iraq.

Khaddam in Riyadh

NICOSIA (R) — Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam held talks with Saudi Arabian leaders Sunday shortly after arriving in Riyadh on an unannounced visit, the Saudi Press Agency said. It said Khaddam, who was accompanied by Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa, had talks with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah and Foreign Minister Saad Al Faisal.

Iranian delegation in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iranian delegation arrived in Iraq Sunday carrying a message from Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati to his Iraqi counterpart Tareq Aziz, the Iraq News Agency said. The Iranians — led by Mostafa Fumani Haeri, head of the foreign ministry's Gulf department — would discuss ways to implement a recent agreement allowing Iranians to visit holy Shi'ite shrines in Iraq, INA added.

34 killed in soccer violence in S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — At least 34 people were killed Sunday when violence erupted at a soccer match over a referee's decision, the independent South African Press Association (SAPA) reported. The news agency quoted police as saying the incident occurred at a match near the town of Orkney, about 130 kilometres southwest of Johannesburg. "At the moment, there are 34 dead, but we are still counting," SAPA quoted police as saying. He said there was no indication the violence was politically motivated.

Iranian health minister dismissed

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's health minister Iraj Fazel was dismissed Sunday for mismanagement of the ministry that led a shortage of medicines and doctors. Tehran Radio said Fazel was dismissed by President Hashemi Rafsanjani after the parliament voted for his dismissal Sunday. Rafsanjani said he was "sorry to see one of my close colleagues go." The report did not elaborate on why Fazel was dismissed. But corruption in the ministry has reportedly led to state-purchased medicines being diverted to the black market, where they are sold at exorbitant prices.

Cairo names envoy to Libya

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt has appointed an ambassador to Libya, a move that signalled the formalisation of diplomatic relations between the two countries, press reports said. Cairo newspapers said Mostafa Al Shazli left for the Libyan capital Tripoli Sunday to assume his post as Egypt's ambassador to the neighbouring country.

God only knows war or peace, U.N. chief says after Iraq talks

Perez de Cuellar heads for meeting with Mitterrand before reporting to council

From Lamis K. Andoni with agency dispatches

UNITED NATIONS Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar flew out of Bagdad after 150 minutes of talks with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on the outcome of his talks in Bagdad, said President Saddam and Foreign Minister Tareq Aziz bad given him "a very clear idea of their positions."

Asked whether there would be war or peace, the veteran Peruvian diplomat answered:

"That is a question almost impossible to answer... it is something only God knows."

But, he did say: "Everyone wants peace and everyone wants to act in good faith."

In the flurry of diplomatic activities that centred around the U.N. chief's mission to head off an assault on Iraq by the American-led multinational forces arrayed in the Gulf,

(Continued on page 5)

Saddam replies to Assad's call with invitation to join forces

"Our 19th province has become the field of the showdown which will liberate the (Arab) Nation, God willing," Saddam said in the message.

Assad, urging Saddam to put aside years of enmity, Saturday appealed to the Iraqi president to make a "brave" decision and withdraw from Kuwait to spare the Arabs a destructive war.

Saddam urged Syria instead to switch sides and join with Iraq.

"It will be an event which will be recorded in history if President Hafez Al Assad joins the group of the faithful and reacts with them so that the group will be more powerful," he said.

The field of the 19th province has become a battlefield for the showdown in which the (Arab)

Nation will be triumphant and Palestine, the Golan Heights and Lebanon and all the underdogs will be victorious over the U.S. administration, Zionism and corrupt Arabs," said Saddam.

Assad urged Iraq to quit Kuwait in an unusual appeal read by an announcer over Damascus Radio. He called on Saddam to put aside years of enmity between them and to "listen to the advice of a brother."

"I am not making this appeal to embarrass anyone, but I am appealing to a live conscience to deny our enemy the opportunity for which they have been longing," Assad said.

"Israel alone stands to benefit

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Anti-war protests rock Europe; U.S.

BONN (Agencies) — Tens of thousands of anti-war protesters filled Europe's streets for a second straight day Sunday to demand that dialogue replace diatribe in the Gulf standoff.

The demonstrations, from Germany to Spain, came as U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar met in Bagdad with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein just two days before the deadline for a pullout from Kuwait.

Pacifists were also reportedly

voiced to target Israel first if war breaks out in the Gulf.

Health Minister Ehud Olmert, a confidant of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, told reporters after the weekly cabinet meeting that Israel would strike back if attacked.

"If Israel is attacked, we will react. This is something that must be understood. We do not expect anyone to fight for us. We do not want anyone to protect us. We will do it ourselves,"

Olmert said.

A senior U.S. delegation, headed by Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, met Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens and Foreign Minister David Levy but officials from both sides refused to disclose the purpose of the mission.

The New York Times said Saturday U.S. President George Bush sent Eagleburger to assure Israel that Washington would try to protect it against an Iraqi attack and to urge Israel to stay attacked.

"Whether or not there was a (U.S.) request is irrelevant, we will retaliate," the health minister said.

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13 die in army violence in Lithuanian capital

VILNIUS. The Soviet Union (Agencies) — Thousands of people chanting "freedom" rallied Sunday outside Lithuania's parliament building after Soviet troops stormed the republic's broadcast station, leaving 13 people dead and 110 injured, Lithuanian officials said.

The United States and the European Community (EC) condemned the predawn Kremlin assault, and high-ranking NATO officials held an emergency meeting in Brussels on the situation. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said the attack "contradicts the basic principles" of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Kremlin forces deployed to the secessionist Baltic republic last week to enforce the military draft have taken control of at least seven key buildings in Lithuania.

Lithuanian nationalists built barricades outside the parliament on Sunday in the expectation the Soviet forces would try to seize the building. One Soviet general said such a move was

possible.

Lithuanian lawmakers, meeting inside the parliament building in an emergency session, designated the republic's foreign minister to set up a government-in-exile if the Kremlin also crushed them. The legislators declared independence from Moscow in March.

Meanwhile, Albertas Sbitenėnas, who was elected Lithuania's prime minister Thursday, appeared at the parliament late Sunday after being reported missing. The parliament, which was called into an emergency session Sunday by Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis, had elected Gediminas Vagnorius to replace Sbitenėnas.

Landsbergis said Sbitenėnas had put his family in a safe place and had encountered difficulty in getting back to the parliament building. He is expected to have his powers restored to him by the legislators.

Parliament also declared Sunday a day of mourning and asked people to raise flags with black ribbons and ring church bells.

The Lithuanian news agency

"It depends on what happens in the next few hours, the next few days," Sununu told Leslie Stahl on CBS television's Face the Nation.

Soviet "actions could cost the Soviet Union the support of Western Europe and the United States," he added.

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All would be losers in war — King

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein said Sunday in a U.S. television interview that any use of force by a U.S.-led coalition against Iraq would bring disaster to the Arab World and cripple future U.S.-Arab relations.

"You may win one battle but you will lose the entire Arab World," King Hussein said in an interview from Amman on the Cable News Network (CNN).

"No one disputes the power and strength of the United States and the ability to inflict a lot of

damage, but inflicting such damage in this case in a war against an entire Arab people, the Muslim people, and the result would be horrendous," King Hussein said.

"I don't think the future (of U.S.-Arab relations) would be very bright."

The King said all sides would be losers if war breaks out in the Gulf.

If there is war, "in the final analysis I don't think there will be any victor. All of us are going to be losers," he said in the interview with Rowland Evans.

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King Hussein painted a bleak picture of any war in the Gulf, citing the cost in human lives and to the environment.

Economically, and for quality of life, a war "is going to set the entire region back," King Hussein said.

He reiterated his vow not to allow any foreign airplanes to use Jordanian air space in a Gulf war.

"We've made it abundantly clear that those who we got in touch in the recent past, many leaders in the world and we publicly stated that our stand is one

of defending our sovereign territory and we will not stand any violations either by land or in the air. We will try our best to prevent them from any part," he said.

The interview was broadcast just hours after U.S. President George Bush thanked Congress for voting to authorise force against Iraq if it does not leave Kuwait by Tuesday.

"Maybe force can achieve some initial results but we would

(Continued on page 5)

King receives Libyan message

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received a message from Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi on the Gulf crisis and means to resolve the crisis through peaceful means.

The message was delivered to the King by Major Abdul Salam Jalloud, member of the Libyan Revolutionary Council.

The audience was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker,

the King's Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Salam Massadeh and Foreign Minister Taher Masri.

Jalloud arrived here early Sunday leading an official Libyan delegation on a short visit to Jordan for talks with the prime minister and other senior officials on the situation in the region and the Gulf crisis as well as bilateral relations.

(Continued on page 5)

Hurd sees slim chance for peace

AMMAN (J.T.) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said Sunday he saw only a slim chance of averting war in the Gulf and called for an early military assault to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait if it refused to leave peacefully.

Hurd said he hoped U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar could persuade Iraqi President Saddam Hussein before heading back to Europe and the U.N. headquarters.

"The world is holding its breath obviously for what is happening and what is about to happen in Baghdad," he said.

"There is a chance, not a very strong chance and we all hope that that chance will succeed."

Hurd, the most hawkish U.S. ally in the American-led anti-Iraq coalition, said Iraq had to comply with U.N. demands that it withdraw completely from Kuwait.

"It is essential that (Iraq) shows a clear decision to withdraw and begin to implement that. The practicalities can be discussed by the secretary-general," he said.

But Hurd said the alliance opposing Iraq should strike quickly once the peace option had been exhausted.

"I can't see any reason or prospect of long delay once it becomes clear that the chance of peace we are talking about no longer exists," Hurd said.

He essentially repeated Britain's and the European Community's backing for an international peace conference to tackle the Palestinian issue once Iraq withdrew from Kuwait but again ruled out any suggestion of linkage between the Gulf crisis and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"We believe that a conference would be an important technique for finding a lasting and just

(Continued on page 5)

De Michelis says PLO holds key to resolving Gulf crisis

ROME (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) holds the key to peace in the Gulf and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat should ask Saddam Hussein to withdraw Iraqi troops from Kuwait, the Italian foreign minister was quoted as saying Sunday.

Minister Gianni de Michelis, who is expected to visit Iraq Monday or Tuesday, talked by telephone Saturday with Arafat and Sunday received the PLO's permanent delegate to Italy, Nemer Hammadi, for talks which allowed for a further, deeper exchange of views on what can still be done in the attempt to save peace in the Gulf," the Foreign Ministry said in a communiqué.

De Michelis spoke with reporters Sunday afternoon in Venice where he attended a gathering of members of his Socialist party.

The PLO "has in hand the key

to peace," and for this reason Arafat ought to make a unilateral declaration, issuing Saddam Hussein an invitation to withdraw from Kuwait based on the U.N. resolutions," the Italian news agency ANSA quoted de Michelis as saying. Such a decision would "certainly be in the interests of the Palestinians themselves," de Michelis said.

De Michelis told reporters that he used the same words on Saturday in his telephone conversation with Arafat in Baghdad.

The minister instead seemed to dismiss Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's last-minute attempts to make a deal between the two sides.

"But the conference is already not only desired by the overwhelming majority of nations, but, in my opinion, seems to be

minute idea, as if to say 'I'm here, too,'" de Michelis was quoted as saying.

The ministry statement said peace in the Gulf was the "mandatory premise for the concrete start of a process capable of favouring the holding of a peace conference on the conflicts and tension in the Middle Eastern region, starting with the Arab-Israeli one."

ANSA quoted de Michelis as saying that Arafat could have an influence on the Iraqi leader.

De Michelis reiterated that "no one is inclined to create a direct deal" between the two sides.

Earlier, the spokesman, Renaud Tocquet, said the team in Mogadishu would stay if the combatants guaranteed to permit adequate shipments of medical supplies.

"The need food and medicine, things like blankets and tents... a lot of people have left the city and we need tents for them," he told a news conference.

He said he asked Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which he visited before Cairo, for help and had received a positive response.

The minister denied reports by rebels that Siad Barre had fled. "Siad Barre is working normally from the presidential palace," he said at the end of a two-day visit

Saudis postpone reform debate till after crisis

RIYADH (R) — Saudi Arabia's ruling family, preoccupied with the Gulf crisis, has put the lid on an internal debate between liberals and conservatives over the Muslim state's social and political future, diplomats and political sources say.

The Al Saud family has persuaded the liberals to wait some months before they again assert their demands for social reform, greater press freedom and wider public participation in the decision-making process.

The authorities have put an end to an overzealous campaign by the mutawas (volunteers), the religious police who monitor the behaviour of women and the observance of Muslim duties such as regular prayers.

Despite conservative pressure, they have appointed a new leader of the organisation, weeding out some of the extremists and channelling more money to the remainder, diplomats said.

Saudi Arabia, as the cradle of Islam, is run on strictly religious lines.

But the debate between liberals and conservatives has long been simmering under the surface of Saudi society.

"It heated up again after the invasion of Kuwait last August and the subsequent deployment of U.S. troops in the kingdom.

"It really shook people up. Their world view was collapsing. People were all over the map from the shock," said one Western diplomat.

The liberals saw it as a perfect opportunity to press their case because the crisis discredited the conservative motion that Saudi Arabia could isolate itself from

the rest of the world.

The sight of U.S. service-women and Kuwaiti refugee women driving cars, which Saudi women cannot do. And the realisation that foreign non-believers, men and women, might end by dying alongside Saudi soldiers also seemed to strengthen the liberal case.

"The liberals made all the running in the first three months. The watershed was the women's driving incident in Nov. 6. Then the conservatives made a comeback," said a Saudi liberal.

Conservatives, in tracts handed out at universities and elsewhere, denounced the Saudi women who dared to drive in convoy through the streets of the capital Riyadh.

The ban on women driving has taken on enormous importance in the debate because it is one of the weakest links in the conservative case. The ban has no justification in Islamic law, the immutable basis of Saudi law, and the liberals can cite statistics for the economic damage it does to the country.

The liberals say Saudi Arabia has to pay tens of thousands of immigrant workers to drive the women around and the ban helps restrict women's access to the job market.

In November, King Fahd promised to revive plans to set up a consultative council, the nearest thing the country is likely to have to a parliament. But the government has given no details and many Saudis doubt it will see the light in the near future.

"Saudi kings have twice

offered a council, on both occasions under pressure, and on both occasions they have quietly forgotten about it when the pressure was off," said a Saudi businessman.

The first time was in 1962, after the royal family deposed King Saud and when radical Egypt was fighting Saudi-backed conservatives in Yemen. The second was after religious extremists occupied the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Mecca in 1979.

The new head of the mutawa, formally known as the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice, is Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman Al Said, who is reputed to oppose compulsion in private religious matters such as prayers.

A vigorous mutawa campaign in November against rowdy parties attended by women appears to have come to an end, foreign residents said.

It is unclear what direction the debate will take when it resumes, diplomats say. Diplomats say much will depend on how well the royal family manages the Gulf crisis.

The Saudi family, which controls all key posts in government, has generally followed a policy of cautious liberalisation since the Saudi state was created early this century.

King Faisal in the 1960s and 1970s was one of the most active reformers and some liberals re-approach the present king for not pressing hard enough against the conservative lobby.

"But then in King Faisal's day the country had a lot further to go, there was much more reform," said a Saudi executive.



Palestinians throw stones at an Israeli army observation tower in the occupied West Bank.

Palestinians fear mass expulsions if Gulf war starts

By Sami Aboudi

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R)

Palestinian nationalist leaders have told European consul-general in Jerusalem they feared Israel might try to force masses of Arabs from the occupied territories if war erupted in the Gulf.

Israeli security sources flatly denied any such plans.

Five Palestinians, including Faisal Al Husseini, the most senior leader in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, appealed for international protection in a news conference after meeting the European diplomats.

Husseini said Palestinian fears were based on information "from foreign and Israeli groups and the occupation authorities to implement transfer during the war."

"Transfer" is a euphemism used by far-right Israelis for mass expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan.

Palestinian leaders said Israel could use one of many scenarios either to justify the direct expulsion of Arabs or scare people into fleeing.

"We would like to make it clear here that the Israelis will not be able to make accusations saying that Palestinians are attacking the Israeli army to implement their policy," Husseini said.

Ramallah National Council appealed to U.S. President George Bush and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Saturday to avoid war.

"On the occasion of the visit of the secretary general of the United Nations to Baghdad, we ... urge you to avoid war, spare lives and promote a just resolution of all causes of conflict in the Middle East," said a letter signed by 10 religious leaders.

Israel is concerned that Palestinians might step up attacks against soldiers and civilians if a Gulf war erupted.

Security sources say the army would move quickly to crush any sign of rebellion but the action would not include mass expulsions.

The most drastic measures is to change to the open fire regulations," one security source said.

The Israeli army's judge-advocate general said Saturday that rule governing when troops can shoot would be changed if war broke out.

Security sources said troops would be authorised to shoot to kill and impose a curfew on the occupied territories.

Husseini said that some Israeli groups were planning to use the war atmosphere to expel Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan.

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Protests

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gathering along the Iraqi-Saudi border, and in South Africa, Muslim youths shouted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel."

And with the Soviet military intervention in Lithuania, many of the demonstrators turned into dual protests for peace in the Gulf and the Soviet Union.

In the Bonn diplomatic shambles of Bad Godesberg, about 1,200 demonstrators formed a 2.7-kilometre human chain linking the U.S. and Iraqi embassies.

"We wanted to link the two major parties that are now starting towards war," said 41-year-old Gerd Greune. "We wanted to link them symbolically and say, 'please link yourself in non-violence. Violence will not solve any problem'."

In Frankfurt, about 5,000 people protested outside the U.S. Rhein-Main military airport.

On Saturday, more than 200,000 protesters filled streets and market squares throughout Germany to protest the Jan. 15 countdown to war. Their main theme: "No blood for oil."

The anti-war protests were mostly peaceful. However, at a Paris rally Saturday night police fired teargas to disperse about 50 demonstrators who refused to break up, and about a dozen people milling around the U.S. embassy were detained and questioned.

Tens of thousands of anti-war demonstrators rallied in Madrid and a dozen other Spanish cities on Sunday, urging peaceful settlement to the Gulf crisis.

Organisers said more than 50,000 people filled a 1.5-kilometre stretch of a downtown avenue in Madrid.

"No to war. No soldiers in the Gulf," chanted the protesters, who also sang traditional protest songs while a band played.

"The excuse to defend Kuwaiti sovereignty is cynical display by those who occupied Vietnam and Panama, armed the Contras (in Nicaragua) and sustain the Zionist occupation of Palestine, violating human rights and United Nations resolutions," Javier Sodoba said, reading a statement at the Madrid rally signed by 30 groups.

"To stop war, the only possible solution is a withdrawal of foreign troops to pave the way for inter-Arab dialogue," he said.

The demonstrators also urged Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez to recall three Spanish warships patrolling the Gulf area to help enforce a U.N. trade embargo against Iraq.

In Brussels, about 20,000 people demonstrated for peace in the Gulf.

"This is a demonstration of hope. If war breaks out next week, we will have a demonstration of anger," said Hugo Ortega, one of the protest leaders.

Hundreds of anti-war protesters gathered outside the White House and the U.S. Capitol Saturday, many chanting "No blood for oil" and others carrying banners pleading for peace in the Gulf.

"America's children, killed in action" and "which one was the one you loved?" read slogans painted on massive banners raised by demonstrators outside the president's residence.

Protesters tossed an American flag — meant to symbolise a wartime body bag — over the high fence that surrounds the White House. Several demonstrators were arrested, including one woman who screamed "what did I do wrong? I don't want to die" as she was carried into a police lorry.

There were other demonstrations across the United States. Protesters in Los Angeles occupied offices of a lawmaker who supports military action.

Resolution authorises use of U.S. force in Gulf

WASHINGTON (R) — Following are the key provisions of the joint resolution that the Senate and House of Representatives adopted Saturday authorising the use of U.S. military force in the Gulf.

The Senate vote was 52-47 and the House vote 250-183. The measure now goes to President George Bush for signature into law.

"Resolved ... the president is authorised, subject to subsection (B), to use United States armed forces pursuant to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 (1990) in order to achieve implementation of Security Council Resolutions 660, 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 674, and 677."

"... Nothing in this resolution supersedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution."

"... At least once every 60 days, the president shall submit to Congress a summary on the status of efforts to obtain compliance by Iraq with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council in response to Iraq's aggression."

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Cuba not to recall diplomats from Iraq

HAVANA (R) — Cuba's foreign ministry said Saturday it would not withdraw its diplomats from Baghdad despite the threat of war. "We can't pull them out and leave more than 200 civilian health workers there," a ministry spokesman told the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina. Cuban President Fidel Castro said Friday that the 250 Cuban doctors and nurses working in Iraq had asked to stay on there despite the threat of an attack by U.S. and allied forces. The Cuban medical contingent consisted mainly of women doctors and nurses, the ministry spokesman said. Most of the nations with troops deployed against Iraq have withdrawn their embassy staff from Baghdad.

Saudi king donates to Georgia charity

SAVANNAH, Georgia (AP) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd headed a Savannah-area charity's call for help, donating \$100,000 to help replace donations that usually come from area soldiers now stationed in the Middle East. The cheque to the United Way of the Coastal Empire arrived Jan. 8 with a letter saying the king bopped the money would help the families of soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield. "We are really just getting over the shock," said Mike Hughes, president of the chapter, which does charitable work along coastal Georgia. The charity solicited a donation from Fahd because so many of its usual patrons — active soldiers and reservists — have left Georgia for the Gulf, Hughes said. He said donations were down five percent to 10 per cent at a time when many military families need extra help. "King Fahd recognises the impact that the departure of so many area residents would have on the community, and the special difficulties it would create for family members left behind to manage alone," said the letter from Saudi Ambassador Bandar Ben Sultan.

Rocard postpones New Zealand visit

PARIS (R) — A planned visit to New Zealand this month by French Prime Minister Michel Rocard has been postponed because of the Gulf crisis, France said Saturday. The prime minister's office said the two countries would reschedule the visit to take place in the next few months.

Britain warns tourists away

LONDON (AP) — The Foreign Office said Saturday that it is advising British tourists to postpone non-essential visits to Israel and the occupied territories. "British citizens without essential reasons for staying in Israel and the occupied territories should consider leaving," a Foreign Office spokeswoman said.

British minister wants quick war

LONDON (R) — British Defence Secretary Tom King said delaying the use of force against Iraq after expiry of the U.N. deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait would run the risk of greater casualties. "Delay would make the problems and obstacles facing our forces greater and we would run the risk of greater casualties liberating Kuwait later," King said in an interview with the Sunday Express newspaper. Speaking about the British contingent of the U.S.-led alliance of Western and Arab states, he said: "There is a job to be done and they want to get on with it."

Belgium confirms defensive role

BRUSSELS (AP) — The Belgian government Saturday said it would stick to a strictly defensive role in case war breaks out in the Gulf. The opposition blasted the government attitude as coward and incoherent. Maintaining a prudent line which made the government refuse to supply British troops with shells, Prime Minister Wilfried Martens told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives Saturday that Belgian navy ships in the Gulf would not take part in "direct attacks." Martens said the four Belgian ships in the Gulf, most of them mine-sweepers, in case of a conflict, would only take part in mine-sweeping support operations or the evacuation of wounded or refugees.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE	
18:30	Koran
18:45	Programme review
18:50	Children programmes
18:55	News summary
18:58	Local programme
19:00	Programme review
19:05	News in Arabic
19:30	Arabic series
19:45	Programme review
20:00	Local programme
20:05	News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	La Camerette
18:00	News in French
18:05	Weekly sports
18:10	News in Hebrew
18:45	Varieties
18:50	The Golden Girls
18:55	The Keepers
22:00	News in English
22:30	Derrick

PRAYER TIMES	
05:11	Fajr
06:30	(Sunrise) Duha
11:45	Dhuhr
14:33	'Asr
16:57	Maghreb
18:18	Isha

CHURCHES

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Where the hacks are eager to fly

Journalists want to be in Baghdad but things are not necessarily going their way, Mariam Shahin reports

AMMAN — Most foreign journalists have left or are leaving Baghdad and some are even preparing to depart from Jordan as the Jan. 15 United Nations Security council deadline for Iraq to pull out of Kuwait is only a day away.

Fearing that Baghdad and possibly Jordan could be "attacked" if fighting should erupt, some journalists are bowing out of the "media war" which they themselves have helped to create since Aug. 2.

Professional considerations, corporate policies and insurance problems are all part of the current media dilemma of whether "to go to Baghdad, stay there or here or not to do so. But some media people say it is simply a question of "whether covering this conflict from the war front is a story worth dying for."

So, who is staying in Baghdad? Who is going? Why? Or why not?

For the most part, the major American television networks are still there while many major European networks have relocated "for the moment" to Amman. The close to half a dozen Japanese network crews are reportedly leaving Baghdad around Jan. 16 to relocate also to Amman till further notice.

While most print journalists who are still in Baghdad are booked on packed planes returning to Jordan, news agency writers and television agencies, such as World Television Network (WTN) and Visnews, are staying on to file their reports. Most, if not all journalists, covering the crisis from Amman or other places will undoubtedly rely on these agency reports for their reporting and analysis.

According to most Western journalists "access in Baghdad is not so easy" and many say they can almost "cover the stories from here."

TV is favoured.
Having to wait days, weeks

and sometimes months for a visa to Iraq, the ministry of information in Baghdad has in fact discouraged many print and radio journalists from covering the story from the Iraqi front. So, as one European print journalist put it, "I have a good excuse for not going."

Indeed complaints by print and radio journalists that they are discriminated against in favour of the "television mafia" by the Iraqi ministry of information, which decides who gets a visa and who does not, have been rampant since the crisis began nearly six months ago.

"All the Iraqis care about is television," claimed one angry journalist working for a major European newspaper who has been waiting for weeks to get a visa.

Why stay?

While some see the continued presence of some (and they are a few) Western television networks in Iraq as a sign that "there will be no war because the Americans will have an idea when it will boom," others feel differently.

"Even if Iraq or Baghdad is hit, the American network and agency networks will want it to film. What good is hitting Baghdad if you can't show it on TV?" Asked one obvious fan of "realpolitik" who works for a network agency who will stay in Baghdad far beyond Jan. 15.

While at least the four major American channels (ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN) intend to stay on in Baghdad until they are told "to pull out" by their network chiefs back home, most European and Japanese networks are weighing their possible losses.

For the most part, networks are scheduled to decide about the fate of their "teams in Baghdad" sometime today or

tomorrow. At least one team from each BBC, Dutch, French and Spanish televisions is still in Iraq, according to their colleagues in Amman.

All flights out of Baghdad

are fully booked and many journalists, as well as television and radio networks, have already made several travel plans and arranged for journeys by car to leave Jordan in case it is drawn into the conflict.

While most western European, Japanese and "other" television networks and journalists have opted for an "American bureau" from which they can monitor agency reports and footage coming out of Baghdad, some feel that Amman could be as dangerous as Baghdad if war breaks out.

According to a random survey by the Jordan Times, however,

those journalists planning to leave Jordan soon are still a small minority.

The insurance crisis

Several networks and newspapers as well as radio stations have complicated insurance policies to follow for their full-time employees and thus most try to "get out of the insurance thing" in order to avoid "unnecessary expenses."

According to a number of freelance journalists currently working out of Amman.

"They send us, freelancers, in because they want to see what is going on in Baghdad and it looks good for the ratings," said one freelancer working for an American network. "But our lives are worth nothing because they are often not required to insure us for our lives," he added.

Many non-Western freelancers and contract correspondents camera-men and sound technicians have also commented that the networks and newspaper syndicates are less "worried about risking the lives of non-Americans and non-Europeans in this conflict."

"This is because some people got the raw end of the deal for damn too long and said 'hell I won't take it anymore,'" he continued.

"Journalists from the Third World, southerners or whatever you want to call them are getting the raw end of the deal and that's of course the reason we have the Gulf crisis today," said one Western analyst in summing up the "media crisis."

"This is because some people got the raw end of the deal for damn too long and said 'hell I won't take it anymore,'" he continued.



KING RECEIVES CREDENTIALS — Two newly-appointed ambassadors to Jordan Sunday presented their credentials to His Majesty King Hussein at separate ceremonies held at Ragheda Palace. (Above) is Ambassador A. Percy Sherwood of Canada who succeeds Michael Bell who ended his duty in Amman in September. (Below) is Dr. Heinrich Reiners of West Germany who succeeds Hervig Bartels who had served as Bonn's ambassador here since 1985. Attending the two ceremonies were Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the King's Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh as well as chief chamberlain Prince Raed Ben Zeid.



King discusses Gulf crisis with Yemeni president and Gandhi

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday conferred on the phone with former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi on the Gulf crisis and the need to reach a peaceful settlement to it.

The King paid tribute to the great efforts made by Gandhi and his group, which includes a num-

ber of politicians, to reach a peaceful settlement.

Saturday the King received a telephone call from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who discussed with him the Gulf crisis and the efforts being made to find a peaceful settlement to it.

The King paid tribute to the

great efforts made by Gandhi and his group, which includes a num-

Badran addresses Senate

Jordan readies full capabilities to deal with any emergency

AMMAN (J.T.) — While Jordan is going ahead with its relentless efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis and avert a devastating war, it is also making full preparedness to deal with any emergency should war break out, Prime Minister Mudar Badran announced Sunday.

The Jordanian government is maintaining its contacts at the Arab and international levels to guarantee a peaceful solution; and it is hoped that these efforts will bear fruit, said the prime minister in an address to the Upper House of Parliament.

We hope that the efforts being exerted by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in Baghdad in addition to those being made by a group of world politicians, who are now communicating between Baghdad and other capitals of the world, would narrow the gap to reach common ground for a successful solution, Badran said.

Regardless of the talk about peace, Jordan is fully prepared for the worst, and has completed its defensive preparations at all levels, said the prime minister. "We are not going to allow anyone to penetrate Jordanian territory and will resist any such

Parliament appeals for Saddam-Fahd summit

Following the session, members of parliament appealed to the leaders of Iraq and Saudi Arabia to meet urgently to resolve their differences over Kuwait and remove the threat of a divisive war in the Arab World.

Both chambers of parliament sent messages to President Saddam Hussein and King Fahd, calling on them to resolve the dispute in a brotherly spirit without non-Arab involvement.

"Uplifting the fuse of war through your meeting in these decisive moments of our (Arab) Nations' history," the Lower House said. "Save our land from the destructions of war."

The Upper House appeal said resolution of the dispute by King Fahd and President Saddam would "put an end to plots carried out by foreign enemies" to "divide and subjugate the Arab World."

The Upper House made a separate appeal to Arab and Muslim countries with forces ranged against Iraq to withdraw from the alliance.

It was said it was not logical "that the weapons in your hands be pointed at the chests of your brothers in Arabism and Islam."

attempt with all our might and with all available means," Badran stressed.

Reiterating his earlier statement to the Lower House of Parliament, the prime minister said that Jordan would get help from Syria which promised to assist Jordan in case of an external attack as Syria considers the Jordanian and Syrian fronts together and on equal footing.

Several Upper House of Parliament members addressed the session which was dedicated to the Gulf crisis and the prospects of war and peace.

"We cannot imagine that a war will break out in the Gulf with the Arab troops standing behind the Americans," said Senator Ahmad Obaidi, a former prime minister.

"It is hard to believe that their gunfire will be pointed towards the Iraqis for the interest of the Americans and the Zionists," he told the 40-seat Senate.

Hammud Al Farhan, a pan-Arabist senator, said recent statements by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak contained a threat to Jordan's national security.

"He told Israel she had the right to hit back at Iraq if Baghdad attacked her, but such a response means allowing Israel to use Jordan's land or air to retaliate," he said.

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Annab-Tsutsui: Jordan InterContinental's service is of the same calibre that offered by the InterContinental Hotel Group worldwide.

His Excellency Mr. Ziyad Annab Chairman of the board of Jordan Hotels and Tourism Co. Ltd and owners of Hotel Jordan InterContinental, together with Mr. Yuji Tsutsui Chairman of the board of Saison Overseas (Holdings) BV., owners of InterContinental Hotels group worldwide, commended the hotel for its continued commitment to high standards of quality service.

They went on to state that the standards of customer care were in the very best traditions of Arabic hospitality and that the Hotel Jordan InterContinental service is fully comparable with that offered by the InterContinental Hotels Group worldwide.

Mr. Majed Khalil General Manager of Hotel Jordan InterContinental, on behalf of the hotel's family thanked both chairmen for their support and good wishes.

Under the visionary leadership of the Japanese Corporation, the hotel is benefiting from greater support for Jordan as a tourist attraction.

Although the large influx of journalists contributed to the volume of business in the last five months of 1990, Mr. Raymond Khalife, the Senior Vice President of InterContinental Hotels for the Middle East and Africa, pointed out that the hotel had been exceeding its budgets for the first seven months of last year as well.

Both chairmen in their message to the staff of the hotel wished peace and prosperity to Jordan and continued progress under the wise leadership of H.M. King Hussein.

Labour unions show solidarity with Iraqis

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The central council of the Federations of Jordanian Labour Unions sent 150 representatives to Iraq to voice their appeal for peace in the region, and to show solidarity with the people and children of Iraq.

The representatives, who left Jordan Saturday, will meet with members of federations of labour unions from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco currently in Iraq. The World African labour unions have organised the dispatch of the second peace ship "Balqis" that is carrying food and medicine for Iraq. This ship, a donation from the Arab North African countries, is scheduled to arrive at the port of Basra on Jan. 15th.

"This march is a show of solidarity with the people of Iraq," Ayed Salim, member of the central council told the Jordan Times. He added that during their stay in Iraq, representatives of the Jordanian labour unions will meet with high government officials and representatives of the Iraqi labour unions who are organising a festi-

Jordan gets German aid

AMMAN (J.T.) — Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath have received private donations of food and medical supplies due to requests they made personally to H.R.H. Markrabin of Baden and H.H. Prince Emanuel von Hohenzollern.

The medical donations comprising of substantial quantities of insulin syringes, antibiotics and medical instruments were sent to the people of Jordan from Germany — AID Baden (a charitable organization headed by the Markrabin of Baden) and will be distributed by the Ministry of Health.

He also added that the march itself was organised beforehand to coincide with the United Nations date, to prove that "we are concerned about this case," he said.

The 150 representatives are also carrying their own contribution of food and medicine to the Iraqi people.

"We have collected close to JD 5,000 in donations and we bought them food and medicine to take to Iraq," Salim said.

The representatives are expected to be back from Iraq on the 16.

Israel should not intervene," Sharash said.

Sharash said Syria would side with the Arabs if attacked by Israel.

"Syria cannot accept an Israeli intervention in this crisis," Sharash said.

Israel has tried to keep a low profile since Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2 and sparked the crisis.

Arab countries opposed to the invasion of Kuwait fear that any Israeli attack against Iraq would play into the hands of Iraq and weaken the alliance.

Thousands of foreigners crowded Ben-Gurion airport, filling evacuation flights after the United States and Britain joined other countries in advising their citizens to leave Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A fundamentalist Islamic movement in the occupied territories urged Muslims Saturday to sabotage U.S. interests and undermine the alliance.

"If Israel is attacked we will use the legitimate right of any country that is attacked to respond," he said.

Asked if Israel was considering a pre-emptive strike against Iraq, he said: "We have not been talking about pre-emptive strikes at all..."

"In this case, it is meant to reshuffle the cards and therefore

Kilani outlines steps in support of Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Ibrahim Zeid Al Kilani Sunday returned home from Baghdad where he took part in an Islamic conference which concluded in the Iraqi capital Friday.

In an arrival statement Kilani said that the conference had unanimously adopted a number of resolutions aimed at supporting Iraq against any aggression by America and its allies.

The conference approved a ruling that it was not permissible to seek assistance from non-Muslims to fight Muslims, and noted that it is not in line with the Holy Koran or Hadith (the Prophet's traditions) to seek the assistance of non-Muslim to fight a Muslim brother.

The minister met with all institutions co-operated.

Also Sunday, the minister met with president and members of the Jordan Agricultural Engineers Association (JAEA) and discussed with them issues pertaining to unemployment among agricultural engineers.

The minister said the ministry will grant special allowances to all agricultural engineers working in various parts of Jordan. The JAEA President Ghaleb Abu Ibrahi reviewed the problems facing agricultural engineers, noting that the number of unemployed agricultural engineers stands at 600.

He suggested that such engineers undergoing military service (conscription) be employed at agricultural corporations after completing the three month military training period.

Alawneh looks into ways to aid farmers, engineers

AMMAN (Petra) — Agriculture Minister Mohammad Alawneh Sunday discussed with directors of the Agricultural Credit Corporation, the Jordan Cooperative Organisation and the Jordan Valley Farmers Federation on a number of issues relevant to agricultural credit policies and agricultural services offered to farmers. The subject of unifying all agricultural credit corporations in one governmental or non-governmental organisation was also reviewed.

The minister also discussed the possibility of setting up a public corporation for agricultural services, which, once established, would be in charge of providing loans and other needs of farmers at cost price.

Alawneh stressed the need on the part of the government to prepare and approve an integrated agricultural policy, to be implemented by the ministry in

Deputies approve economic law, accord

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday voted 32 to 28 to convene a secret session to hear Prime Minister Mudar Badran speak on the current situation in the Gulf and Jordan's stand and preparedness by them in the event of war.

Before closing the session the House passed a law that establishes a public investment body, the Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC).

According to the law the JIC will handle the government's investment in shareholding companies and the pension fund investments.

The House also passed an agreement with the French government by which the latter provides Jordan with a 25 million French franc easy loan to be settled over 15 years.

Abu Nowar explains CSC functions

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) follows a set of procedures in filling vacant posts at government offices, with attention given to those with the right qualifications for the job, and appointments all take place fairly with opportunities given to all applicants, according to CSC President Mohammad Saeed Abu Nowar.

The CSC takes into consideration fair competition for any job and the need to distribute jobs in accordance with geographic locations, said Abu Nowar at a meeting with a parliament team examining the CSC's work.

The team, chaired by Jamal Khreisha, chairman of the administrative committee in the Lower House of Parliament, discussed with Abu Nowar conditions and terms for appointment in public offices and government departments.

Abu Nowar said that the CSC and the Institute of Public Administration together set the guidelines for selecting persons for government offices in accordance with the sets of regulations.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

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Need to be prepared

WHETHER WAR is on or off it is only rational that the country's civil defence capabilities be stepped up for any eventuality. It took an event the magnitude of the Gulf crisis to awaken Jordan to the need for better preparedness for war. As a matter of fact with the Israeli military threat being what it is, Jordan's civilians should always be better prepared for any emergency or eventuality. It is comforting that Jordan has established a Higher Council of Civil Defence with the specific mandate of organising and synchronising all national efforts in civil defence operations.

The remaining question is why it took the government so long to involve the people in the necessary training for any war situation. Given the fact that Jordan has literally been in a state of alert since the eruption of the Kuwaiti situation, one wonders why the degree of national preparedness in civil defence was only belatedly felt by our authorities. Perhaps there is no need for gas masks, for example, because it is felt that Jordan is not likely to be targeted with such weapons by any side, yet the country should have also discussed and debated such a scenario even if it is deemed remote by our military experts. Only recently Jordanian television started screening ways for effective civil defence. It is ironic that such dissemination of vital information on civil defence is taking place only hours before the U.N. deadline for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait expires. Most Jordanians would still be taken by surprise should armed hostilities break out in the Gulf region and spread to the rest of the Middle East and would not know what to do about it. Even the most basic information on civil defence is still wantonly lacking. It is regrettable that prior to the school break for the winter holidays no effort whatsoever was made to educate children on even rudimentary civil defence procedures.

But better late than never. The concerned authorities are now in full gear doing all they can to start the process of appropriate civil defence for the entire country. The idea of establishing committees in various ministries is also a step in the right direction. It stands to reason that any effective civil defence operations must be multi-disciplinary. The Civil Defence Department (CDD) can still spearhead such multifaceted efforts given its wide experience in such endeavours. Amman has always been optimistic that war will never occur in the Gulf region. That sense of optimism stems from Jordan's inner conviction that man can never descend to the level of waging war when war is not necessary. Jordanians will cling to this faith in man's sanity till they are proven wrong. The next few days, however, would either vindicate us or prove us wrong. In either case, civil defence is something over which none of us can gamble.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IT is premature to predict the outcome of U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar's visit to Baghdad although the U.N. chief had expressed optimism over his Baghdad mission, said Al Rai' Arabic daily Sunday. But one can only wonder if such a mission will succeed in the light of the hostile activities on the part of the foreign secretaries of Britain and the United States which aim at sabotaging de Cuellar's bid to end the crisis in the Gulf by peaceful means, the paper noted. Both London and Washington are beating the drums of war, escalating tension and ignoring Iraq's demand for a settlement to the Palestine problem on equal footing with the Gulf crisis, the paper said. Needless to say that de Cuellar's mission depends largely on what the U.N. chief is presenting to the Iraqi press... who does not object to a settlement to the Gulf crisis if the United Nations is ready to deal with other crisis by the same criteria, the paper added. De Cuellar should realise, said the paper, that settling the Arab-Israeli dispute and ending the Palestine problem concerns the United Nations organisation which is under obligation to implement its own resolutions as it is now doing in the case of the Gulf crisis and the Security Council resolutions taken in that regard. It said that de Cuellar realises too well that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are occupied territories and that Israel has rejected all United Nations resolutions calling for a withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Arab lands. But it should be noted at the same time, the paper continued, that the Iraqi leaders will no doubt listen carefully to the U.N. chief because they are seriously concerned with peace not war and the heating of drums by London and Washington can by no means prevent the U.N. mission from attaining success if it is based on right and justice.

It is Iraq's right to launch an attack on Israel in the event of a foreign attack on Iraqi territory as has been declared openly by the Iraqi leaders, says columnist Mahmoud Rimawi Sunday. By waging a military strike against Israel, Iraq will be implementing U.N. Security Council resolutions which call for Israel to pull out its forces from the occupied Arab territories. Since the United States and its allies are basing their threat and directing their forces against Iraq to force it to pull out from Kuwait, the Arabs have all the right to force Israel to withdraw from occupied Palestine by the same standard and criteria, says the writer. Again, in the event of a U.S. attack on Iraq, the Iraqi leadership has the full right to conclude that Israel is an accomplice in that aggression since it is America's strategic ally, a fact that has been corroborated in the Israeli wars against the Arabs since 1956, says Rimawi. He notes that in any attack on Iraq the Americans must surely base their logistics and other considerations on the help they get from the Jewish state, which in fact represents America's base in the Arab region. Iraq has the right to come to the aid of the Palestinians struggling to regain their freedom and has all the right to launch a pre-emptive strike on Israel to prevent the latter from attacking Iraqi targets, the writer stresses. He says Washington which has been supporting Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands over the past 23 years must expect that its strategic ally in the region will be targeted by Iraqi forces in the event of any war in the region.

Weekly Political Pulse

RJ deserves better

ONE wonders what are the real motives behind tightening the blockade on Jordan by all countries, its traditional allies. First came the clampdown on Jordan's only sea outlet, the port of Aqaba. Ships to and from Aqaba are now regularly and systematically harassed by the champions of free navigation on the high seas. After so many months of interference in Jordan's shipping connection, Jordanian people have become stoic. It is viewed as a part of a bigger and broader picture depicting widespread gloom. So when the chips are down for the country and its people, is it the right time to punch holes in Jordan's national airline. Royal Jordanian, when it is the country's only remaining contact with the outside world, with the exception of one or two other airlines? Is it right to rejoice in the woes of Royal Jordanian and make false predictions that it is going under.

For sure Royal Jordanian

has many problems. But these problems were inherited not made. It is selling planes to make ends meet. It is not making profits and can barely stand on its feet. But does such a state of health justify the call by some that it should be liquidated? How could it be sensible to ask, now of all times, when the country is besieged that an airline company that served the country and its people for decades should go? Instead of calling for the dismantling of an important Jordanian institution to which many Jordanians have contributed, would it not be better and wiser to offer some prudent prescription for correcting whatever malaise it may be suffering from? If one would hate to see the demise of my country's national airline, I would rather predict that the wrongs in the company can still be rectified. I made it a point recently to check on RJ's situa-

I was told on good authority

tion that RJ is not bad with the airline. The figures cited portray a rosier picture than some would want us to believe. One does not need to be an economist to comprehend where the airline is heading. To begin with, there is hardly an airline in the world today which is not suffering. If two giant airlines, Pan Am and TWA, are contemplating merger in view of the dire economic conditions facing airlines worldwide, RJ cannot be blamed for worrying. The main objective now is to keep our airline afloat morally and materially. For this purpose it is imperative that one has a broad perspective of what RJ is all about. To begin with it is no ordinary airline established solely to make a profit. The airline's goals and objectives go beyond these considerations.

What we are talking about is an airline which is assuming burdens and responsibilities that go beyond the normal call

of duty. It is a fact that RJ is promoting tourism in the country and has incurred so many extraneous expenses for no other reason than to help out the tourism industry of Jordan. How many folkloric activities has RJ assumed at a considerable expense to itself for the avowed purpose of promoting tourism and selling Jordan as a touristic attraction to the far reaches of the world? How many exhibitions and social and cultural events has the airline sponsored and borne the expenses of? RJ has been a cargo carrier for many Jordanian markets including agricultural markets at a time when Aqaba became blockaded by naval ships. If one chooses to scrutinise the company on the basis of raw economic terms, then a fair and balanced analysis is called for as well. The 1980s in Jordan have been characterised as years of a continuing recession. In 1988 the dinar underwent

drastic devaluation that made imports doubly expensive. Fuel costs went up a great deal for RJ because it had to pay for it in the depreciated currency.

Political instability in the region has haunted the airline right from the beginning. Considerable investment was made in its fleet in the early 80s yet the repayments on the loans to purchase them was somehow never reflected in the budgets of the golden era of the airline. The payments on these loans have now accumulated at a time when, for political reasons beyond the control of the airline, the management cannot make them without support from the government. For the government to refrain from helping the airline make the necessary payments now would mean the forfeiting of the payments already made on them. Besides, payments would not absolve the government from responsibility be-

cause it is the guarantor. The government made a wise decision to rescue Petra Bank to the tune of JD 250 million. Why is it now unwilling to help RJ face the formidable economic difficulties it is now facing for no fault of its own? Suffice to recall that RJ was projected to more than break even in 1990. Then came Aug. 2, and everything changed. The Gulf crisis brought to a halt the tourism business and interrupted the normal flow of air traffic through Amman. It also caused insurance rates and fuel prices to reach new heights. It would seem utterly irresponsible to think now in terms of starting all over again and build a new airline under a new name. Jordan has invested so many years to build-up the name and image of RJ to the extent that it has become respected worldwide. To start a new company now would mean that all the efforts of the last decades for RJ would go down the drain.

Better to persevere with sanctions than launch all-out war

By Paul H. Nitze and Michael F. Stafford

WASHINGTON — All-out war in the Gulf would not necessarily discourage other potential aggressors. Defeating Saddam Hussein promptly in an all-out war would send an unequivocal signal that this aggression had not been tolerated. But if casualties were high, U.S. sentiment probably would be driven toward a more isolationist posture.

Many Americans would be dismayed by the carnage and resentful that allies were not paying a similar price. (The seeds of such resentment already exist.) They could be expected to oppose any comparable U.S. role in the future. The message would be that the United States had neither the inclination to work in concert with other countries nor the stomach to repeat the anti-Iraq action. Other states — including Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt — could be destabilised, with strong internal forces rising in opposition, enraged by their governments' collaboration with Americans who had killed thousands of their Arab brothers.

In all this ferment, U.S. influence could be reduced to shoring up friendly regimes, if America had the stomach for it. All these troubles would be exacerbated if Saddam were to succeed in drawing Israel into the war.

And with instability in the Middle East, oil supplies would remain quite uncertain. If Syria or Iran replaced Iraq as the potentially dominant regional power, or if friendly governments in Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing states were overthrown by hostile, fundamentalist groups, sup-

pplies would be threatened once more.

Finally, a well executed attack on Iraq could sharply set back its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction, but also create problems elsewhere in the region. The crisis has already had this effect; the Saudis, for example, are reported to be seeking to buy a nuclear weapon. The increased regional instability after a war could only heighten these incentives.

□

In sum, the all-out war option seems highly counterproductive in the long term and, certainly not worth the thousands of lives it would cost. Much more promising is continued reliance on sanctions.

First, successful sanctions would be most likely to produce a stable world order.

Critical to this outcome is that a substantially lower level of violence would be more likely to result in continued public support for an active U.S. international role.

Second, this option would likely be less disruptive to regional stability. Any approach that left much of Iraq's military

capability intact would produce a need to retain a peacekeeping force on the front lines, either in Kuwait or in Saudi Arabia, and perhaps elsewhere. While internal destabilisation in other countries of the region would remain a concern, this threat would be lower than that produced by all-out war, especially if the peacekeeping force were primarily Arab.

Third, although oil supplies would remain uncertain, America would be better able to reduce its vulnerability to disruption of those supplies. The key is the U.S. strategic petroleum reserve, which provides an assured source of oil that can be used to make up supply shortfalls or dampen price increases that an unfriendly state might ask to impose.

The reserve already holds almost 600 million barrels, enough to increase market supply by more than 3 million barrels a day more than the United States imports from all Arab OPEC members for as long as six months. For about \$15 billion, or a fraction of the estimated cost of a prompt, all-out war, Washington could increase the reserve to the 1

billion barrels recommended by most experts. In the longer term, Washington could impose an oil tariff to induce conservation (while also generating revenues) and reverse cutbacks in development of alternative energy sources.

Finally, the key to halting proliferation in the region lies not merely with what America does in this immediate crisis but rather in a sustained campaign among potential suppliers to cut off sources of critical materials and technical cooperation.

Successful sanctions would be most likely to encourage such a campaign, but they must be supplemented by provisions for continued inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency and additional U.N. inspections to ensure that supplies remain stemmed.

On all counts, therefore, sanctions — supplemented by air strikes if necessary — promise to serve U.S. interests better than a prompt, all-out war.

Some argue that the threat of all-out war is the key element in the U.S. approach — a weapon in itself — and that Saddam must be convinced that the use of overwhelming

force is imminent before he will back down. Arguments that question the all-out war option, they contend, undermine that strategy. But the momentum toward such a war, whose results threaten to be so costly, may have become dangerously irreversible. War may occur whether it serves U.S. purposes or not.

For the past generation, Americans have regretted that in Vietnam they let the passions of the moment and a lack of healthy scepticism toward presidential claims obscure a clear-headed assessment of national interests. The result was that Washington was driven into a costly, divisive and ultimately counterproductive expansion of a war that lacked adequate public support. Let's not spend the next generation wondering how we came to repeat that mistake.

Mr. Nitze served in the Reagan administration as special adviser on arms control. Mr. Stafford is executive director of the Centre for Science and International Affairs at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. They contributed this comment to *The Washington Post*.

A gathering sense of futility in the Gulf

By Roger Morris

SANTA FE, New Mexico — While the timetable clicks on inexorably in the Gulf, there is a gathering sense of irrelevance about the stark option to which Washington is reduced. Neither war nor a last-minute diplomatic device will resolve the deeper issues that have brought us to this bleak rendezvous in the desert.

Whatever the outcome in Geneva, the administration's choices between battle and backing down betray an underlying futility — and thus carry the seeds of future crisis.

Neither military action or a status-quo ante peace will remedy the incipient turmoil of the Middle East, where a U.S. "victory" by arms or ultimatum will only strengthen bellicose forces such as Iran and Syria while hastening American upheavals.

Nor can Washington bomb or negotiate away the malignant oil dependence of Europe, Japan and the United States, which makes this episode such a reckoning on past negligence. No smart weapons will alter the caprice of petroleum politics or the inequities inflicted by the oil market on poor countries.

Just as some showdown with Saddam Hussein will not release the resources needed for development and social peace in the Middle East, it will waste precious billions amid a deepening economic agony in the United States.

In George Bush's strategy promises a creative initiative on the anachronistic Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at once symbol and substance of

the larger crisis. No success now envisioned by the White House, whether through blood or through bluster, purges that poison, and any success will probably only deepen it.

Least of all do President Bush's options genuinely serve the heralded new world order, the beckoning image of a post-cold war consortium of nations in which the president has wrapped his venture and for which thousands of Americans may soon die.

With its preponderance of U.S. forces in front of token, rear-guard allies, the martial assembly in the Gulf may be the precedent for future Punk expeditions by the Pentagon but scarcely for a new era of waging war.

Washington's corridor cajolery and economic-political blackmail, simply to gather resolutions and big-leaf constituents, have hardly lent fresh legitimacy to the United Nations. In its reflexive resort to Great Power extortion, the White House squandered an opportunity for authentic progress toward unilateral responsibility.

Imagine the alternatives: a United States that had no cynically armed one more dictator not rendered itself an energy hostage in the greed of the 1980s; a Washington no longer culpable in profiteering and inequity in world resources; a president dedicated to statesmanlike lifting of the Arab-Israeli curse with genuine international initiative; a world in which 400,000 Americans need not be in the Gulf, because a principled foreign policy was there before them.

Instead, it is to the Bush administration — without effective check or balance because of the foreign policy abdication of Congress — that America and the rest of the world will still be prey, whatever happens in the next few weeks. Perhaps that is what

makes Washington's expected victory in the Gulf already so

The ultimate irony is that the crisis presents a chance to deal with fundamental challenges of the post-cold war world. In the grim concentration of international attention, these last days of peace afford an opportunity such as no other in this century, and a singular moment for American statesmanship.

A comprehensive and farsighted American peace effort would begin with authentic negotiations with Baghdad, not to reward aggression but to see it in proportion and to look beyond ethnic, territorial and economic grievances dating to the Ottoman Empire.

Iraq would be given equitable national treatment on disputed petroleum and access to the Gulf. Kuwaiti sovereignty would be restored under U.N. auspices, with an end to predatory oil practices.

U.S. and allied allies would be withdrawn in favour of U.N. buffer forces. The price of Iraq's violence would be the dismantling of its threatening arsenals, although this would be part of a larger regional settlement in which concessions would be security for all sides.

Washington would let the European Community take the lead on the Palestinian issue, recognising the Europeans' stake and credibility as well as setting a precedent for shared responsibility. Simultaneously, every resource of U.S. diplomacy would be applied to forging a united Arab commitment to settlement, to ridding Israel of its indispensable enemy by pan-Arab militarisation, on the model of Mikhail Gorbachev's arms initiatives toward the United States.

Washington would lead a world consortium to provide special aid to Jordan, and technical and educational assistance to Palestine, enabling them to gain their peaceful equilibrium.

To the Palestinians the United States would pledge, by a joint resolution of Congress, that any invasion of its pre-1967 territory (excluding Gaza) would be equivalent to an attack on the United States, requiring full U.S. defence. The United States would urge the United Nations, and particularly the Soviet Union to join it. But with or without their participation, the American commitment would be unequivocal.

If Israel failed to join promptly in European-sponsored negotiations, it would be the U.S. position that America's principled support does not extend to mutual suicide and that Israel would be economically sanctioned, like any other international obstructor.

To the Palestinians the United States would pledge its matching commitment to the establishment and integrity of a sovereign state on West Bank and Gaza, in return for the intifada and prompt settlement negotiations. As with Israel, Palestinian hostilities under any guise would bring new, U.S.-sponsored international sanctions.

Washington would lead a world consortium to provide special aid to Jordan, and technical and educational assistance to Palestine, enabling them to gain their peaceful equilibrium.

Washington would lead a world consortium to provide special aid to Jordan, and technical and educational assistance to Palestine, enabling them to gain their peaceful equilibrium.

The writer was a staff member of the National Security Council in the Johnson and Nixon administrations. He contributed this comment to *The New York Times*.

King

(Continued from page 1)

be plunged into disastrous affairs that would last many, many years," the King said.

King Hussein said that Washington had not provided a promised \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion in aid to support economic sanctions against Iraq.

He said Jordan had complied with the sanctions.

King Hussein said he disagreed with a statement by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that Iraqi troops would be reluctant to fight a ground war without air power behind them.

"I do not agree with him on this point," King Hussein said. "... I think that people will defend their territory to the best of their ability and they will be extremely determined."

Saying the Gulf problem was both an Arab and international one, the King said he had "secured in the first 48 hours (of the crisis) an Iraqi commitment to withdraw from Kuwait," and to attend a conference on Middle East issues, but that others did not "keep up with the agreement."

In reply to a question the approach of U.S. President George Bush to the crisis, the King said:

"I cannot certainly speak for the president, but I certainly have had some very strange language throughout this crisis. Yet on the other hand, I do think that I was correct when from the beginning when I predicted that the language of threats and intimidation will not produce the desired results. I still think that there is a chance and we are going to do everything we can to avert war if given the chance. After all, I don't believe in very wildest dreams that anybody can be happy about the prospect of thousands and thousands of people dying and other suffering in and the disaster occurring on such a magnitude...."

Details

(Continued from page 1)

The five members of the Security Council would then issue a statement pledging that Iraq will not be attacked.

Immediately following this step Iraq would start its withdrawal from Kuwait to be replaced by United Nations forces which will oversee the return of the emir of Kuwait and the holding of what was described by the source as "some form of self-expression by Kuwaiti citizens." The source insisted that the word "elections" was not mentioned at this point.

Simultaneously the economic sanctions against Iraq would be lifted, but military sanctions would remain in place for at least another six months.

Following the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the president of the U.N. Security Council would issue a statement calling for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East "at the earliest convenient time."

A call to start negotiations for the disarmament of "chemical, biological and nuclear" weapons from the region would be issued by the Security Council at the same time.

The sources said that the emir of Kuwait had given his approval for the part of the plan which allows for his re-

turn to his country and allowing the "self-expression" to take place.

The sources also added that the U.S. had officially accepted the different elements of the peace plan as proposed by Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

thought."

"Our aim is to preserve the Iraqi forces and regime and to find an Arab solution," Jalloud told reporters.

The Libyan envoy said he had yet to fully discuss the initiative with other Arab leaders.

He said Libya would stand by Jordan's side in case it was attacked by Israel.

Jalloud

(Continued from page 1)

In an arrival statement Jalloud, who will also visit Iraq, noted that the region is "currently facing a great challenge," and that the results of such challenge will affect the Arab region tremendously. "Therefore we either have to step forward or fall back, God forbid," Jalloud said.

"When Iraq took over Kuwait, some of us might have stood by or resisted this Iraqi step but following the entry of American and foreign forces into the Gulf, Arabs have no choice but to support Iraq against the foreign forces," he said.

Libya's position should a war break out in the Gulf, Jalloud said, will have to be decided by Libyan people's committees.

Jalloud called on all international forces, including the United States, to realize that the Gulf crisis is an inter-Arab affair which should be handled by the Arabs themselves.

Reports have suggested that a French-Arab initiative to resolve the Gulf crisis would be presented soon. The initiative is said to have been prepared by the Arab Maghreb Union and France.

Jalloud said he could not speak about details of the plan now.

He voiced hope that the Soviet Union would embark on an action to find a peaceful settlement to the crisis. He was referring to a decision adopted by the Soviet Parliament calling on President Mikhail Gorbachev to work towards finding a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis.

Jalloud described the decision as an extremely important and an indicator of the Soviet leadership's interest in finding a peaceful settlement.

Gadhafi spoke on the telephone Saturday with French President Francois Mitterrand, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti and Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzales.

According to the Libya news agency JANA, "Gadhafi urged them to make a serious efforts to save world peace and work to extract a positive stand from Iraq which will encourage the convening of an emergency and expanded Security Council in Geneva in which Middle East and Mediterranean basin countries take part."

JANA described Jalloud's trip as part of a "last attempt to save the people of Iraq and to spare the world the disaster of destruction."

Jalloud, before leaving Amman, said he discussed with King Hussein a Libyan peace initiative for the Gulf crisis which he said bore an "Arab outlook."

Asked if his plan was similar to that of the U.N. Secretary general, now in Baghdad, he said: "(Javier) Perez de Cuellar represents a moral authority but his initiative carries the ideas of the West and America."

"We are offering an initiative from an Arab outlook and our aim is to delay war as a first step to get it out from our political

defend Iraq and the honour of the nation," Saddam said.

"If you want to talk and define everybody's commitment, we are ready to do that in a correct way..." he said.

Saddam said if Assad joined the believers, "you will see the whole background of the issues in a different way and realize that the one who withdraws from the alliance of believers ... will crumble down."

He accused Mubarak of joining the anti-Arab coalition, "for a disgraceful down payment paid by the U.S." Washington forgave Egypt's \$7 billion military debts after it joined the anti-Iraq alliance.

INA quoted Saddam as telling Japanese Socialist leader Takao Doi and an accompanying delegation: "We believe that the way for security and stability in the region lies in giving Palestine back to its people and the Arabs all their usurped rights..."

"One standard should be followed, not two... it is then that we will feel safe and security and stability prevail in the region," Saddam was quoted as telling his Japanese visitors.

Saddam referred to Assad in the message as "Your Excellency" and as the president of the Syrian Arab Republic. He also said the Iraq-Syria rift was a lesson from the past and a "great test" for the Arab Nation to learn from.

Iraq warned Sunday it had surprised weapons which would astound its enemies and that tens of thousands of its foes would die even before reaching Iraqi defense lines.

"We will not be disclosing a secret when we say that Iraq's arsenal contains surprises which will astonish our enemies and fascinate our friends. This also applies to our military plan," the Defense Ministry newspaper Al Qadisiya said.

It gave no details, but diplomats in Baghdad have in recent days said Iraq was likely to announce this week it had a new weapon of mass destruction.

Baghdad has successfully developed chemical weapons and medium-range weapons and is widely believed to have biological arms. It has threatened to reduce the Arabian Peninsula to ashes and to hit Israel first if attacked by the U.S. and allied forces.

"Victory in the mother of battles is granted in favour of Iraq and humanity," declared the daily newspaper Al Thawra.

"Iraq is able and ready to inflict a cruel defeat upon the masses of aggressors and their feeble agents," it said, adding that Iraq's confidence of victory was based on "practical and field calculations."

"When war breaks out, (U.S. President George) Bush and those running behind him like small dogs will find out that threatening war and beating its drums is something and going through it and the readiness to sacrifice is another thing," the daily Al Thawra said.

"It is difficult, if not impossible, to penetrate (Iraqi defences) before thousands or tens of thousands of American aggressors are killed on the way. The rest will be met by Iraq's heroes who will annihilate them," Al Qadisiya said.

Al Thawra also said the head of Saudi Arabia's King Fahd would be the first to roll if war broke out in the Gulf.

An article in Al Thawra said:

"We must say that the heads of agents and traitors will be torn apart and flying as punishment for their disgraceful acts."

The officials, cited by several Spanish news outlets, said Gonzalez assured Kaddoumi that the United Nations embargo against Iraq would be lifted if Baghdad

isn't hit.

He said: "The First Class Hotel in Amman that has a Kitchenette in every room....!"

DAROTEL

ENTERTAINMENT

Expatiates and Businessmen

"At the forefront will be the head of the traitor of the two holy shrines who has become a symbol of moral and political decline..."

"The traitor of the two holy shrines" is a term Iraq recently coined as a reference to Fahd's official title as "the custodian of the two holy shrines" in Mecca and Medina.

"Made a gesture" that showed he would comply with U.N. resolutions and pull out its troops.

Kaddoumi arrived in Spain Saturday and told reporters after a meeting with Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordonez that "hope should not be lost for a peaceful solution in the Gulf World if war broke out."

"In an interview published Sunday, Fernandez Ordonez told the Madrid daily El Mundo that Spain hoped for a negotiated end to the crisis."

"Better a poor settlement than a good war," he was quoted as saying.

De Michelis

(Continued from page 1)

an objective fact of the post-crisis period," the minister was quoted as saying at the provincial party.

"Nearly all the European countries, perhaps with the exception of Britain, are ready to set a date. France said so, Italy said so, and others will say so in these hours," he was quoted as saying by ANSA.

French contacts

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas held separate talks Sunday with senior envoys from Egypt and Tunisia as part of a Franco-Arab search for a way to avert a Gulf war.

A day after he held talks in Morocco, Dumas received Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Bourguiba and then Egypt's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali.

France is widely seen as an influential player in last-minute diplomatic efforts to convince Iraq to leave Kuwait or face war after midnight Tuesday.

Bourguiba played down any suggestion of a Franco-Arab peace plan but said the two sides had a wide range of channels to exploit in the peace effort.

"The Arab countries working for peace continue to be optimistic until the last minute," Bourguiba told reporters.

Bourguiba said he saw an opening with Mr. Aziz in Amman. Mr. Perez de Cuellar did not focus on the U.N. demand for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, but instead discussed "the Kuwaiti crisis and means of implementing the U.N. resolutions as well as resolving the Palestinian problem," the Arab diplomat told the Jordan Times.

"This is a new development although not necessarily very significant," he said. "It can be considered as an important starting point in the search for means to avert war."

In his airport comments, Perez de Cuellar was asked to describe his mood after his visit to Baghdad,

"I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic," he replied.

The U.N. chief said Saturday that he carried no specific proposals to Iraq but would discuss a wide range of issues ahead of Tuesday's U.N. deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait for face war.

The Arab diplomat said Arifat had received a call from Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis asking him pave the way for a visit by a European Community (EC) delegation to Iraq before Tuesday.

Arifat said after their meeting that the U.N. chief had a "good chance" of solving the Gulf crisis peacefully.

But he added that the U.S. Congress' Saturday endorsement of military action in the Gulf may undermine Perez de Cuellar's efforts.

"I am surprised how the United States congress votes for war while the U.N. chief is here on a peace mission," Arifat told reporters.

The U.N. chief also met earlier with former Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega, who met Saturday night with Saddam.

Arifat told a news conference he did not believe war would erupt despite Tuesday's deadline.

"No war, no war, no war," Arifat said.

"There will not be a war. You can stay in Baghdad," he told

journalists.

Jordan's information minister, Ibrahim Izzeddine, told reporters in Amman that he was optimistic about Perez de Cuellar's mission in Baghdad and warned of a wave of anti-Western sentiment in the Arab World if war broke out.

"Now, if he is sure that the only choice is either to die, or to stand on his knees only to die afterward, he would prefer war where everybody loses," he said.

Asked if he believed Saddam was a "mad man" who saw himself as saviour of the Arab people, Primakov replied:

"No, I can tell you... I've known him for 21 years, 19 years. That's enough time to figure out what someone is like, whether or not he has some eccentricities."

"I think that man, without a doubt, has a strong will — without a doubt understands the game he is playing," he added.

The commander of the U.S. navy's Middle East force has accused Iraq of sowing mines in the Gulf, and said U.S.-led forces have detonated 17 in the region since December.

William M. Fogarty said some of the mines apparently broke free from Iraqi defences in the Gulf off the coast of Kuwait in heavy weather.

President Bush, freshly armed with congressional support for the use of force against Iraq, said Saturday that war could still be avoided in the Gulf if Iraq begins a "massive, rapid withdrawal of its troops from Kuwait" before Tuesday.

Bush refused to say what action he would take if Iraq continued to defy withdrawal demands after Tuesday, but said he would be inclined to act "sooner rather than later."

"Let there be no mistake," the president told reporters at the White House after the House and Senate bestowed the war-making authority. "Peace is everyone's goal. Peace is in everyone's prayers. But it is for Iraq to decide."

Bush said the votes — 250-183 in the House and 52-47 — sent a clear signal that Iraq "cannot scorn the Jan. 15 deadline." He said congressional authority for peace provided "the best shot for peace" just three days before the deadline.

On the diplomatic front, Mr. Bush said he viewed Mr. Perez de Cuellar's current trip to Baghdad as the "main initiative out there right now" for defusing the crisis.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev "may want to send somebody" to Baghdad, Bush said. The European Community "may decide" to do the same, "but I don't know of that for a fact," certain."

Somalia

(Continued from page 1)

Heavy fighting forced Italy to cancel three evacuation flights it had planned for last Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Ogabeh said one sign of progress in Somalia was the fact the 170-member national assembly was due to meet on Sunday evening to discuss the situation.

The government had invited 100 elders and notables from all tribes to a meeting later Sunday to hammer out ways of ending the fighting, he added.

Asked if Siad Barre was willing to leave office, a key rebel demand, to allow national reconciliation, Ogabeh said the president could only be changed constitutionally through elections promised for later this year.

"Siad Barre was elected constitutionally and can (only) be changed constitutionally but not at the barrel of the gun."

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Economy

Economists predict U.S. interest rates to decline

WASHINGTON (R) — Interest rates in the United States are likely to tumble, economists predict, because few other remedies are available to spur the U.S. economy out of recession.

Economists say the Bush administration is virtually unable to offer any stimulative spending programmes because its deficit is spiralling higher, public debt has reached gigantic proportions and war could be at hand in the Gulf.

The Federal Reserve Board (Fed) has steadily lowered interest rates as the economy's vigour faded and may feel freer to lower them again amid signs that inflation is easing.

Lower food and energy costs pulled wholesale prices down by 0.6 per cent in December, the first drop in eight months, as the recession started boding back price rises.

"The Fed funds rate could be down to six per cent by the end of March," Prudential-Bache Securities analysts Ed Yardeni and Bebbie Johnson said in a commentary.

The budget for fiscal 1992, to

be presented to Congress Feb. 4, is expected to put the deficit for the year starting Oct. 1, heading to \$300 billion or more, leaving President George Bush little or no ground for initiatives.

Bush has said he will have some proposals for easing recession's bite in his State of the Union message to Congress on Jan. 29, but he avoided stirring much hope.

"What I'm going to do about it is to propose ... a broad approach to economic matters that will, I think, enhance growth," Bush said. "But I have no plans to spend a lot of new federal dollars in order to accelerate recovery."

My guess is the State of the Union will be mostly fluff," said Lawrence Chimerine, a senior economic counsellor with DRI, McGraw-Hill Inc. in Lexington, Mass.

"If he does not have a capital gains tax cut in there, then there likely will be some other kind of growth-oriented tax cut. But it is likely to be minor and to have little impact on the economy," he added.

The budget for fiscal 1992, to

Economic downturn, Gulf crisis overshadow diamond market

LONDON (AP) — The worldwide economic downturn, high interest rates and the Gulf crisis made for a lackluster diamond market in 1990, figures released by the De Beers diamond cartel showed.

Sales of rough, uncut diamonds rose two per cent to \$4.17 billion last year, from \$4.09 billion in 1989. De Beers' marketing arm, the Central Selling Organisation said.

It termed 1990 "a year of consolidation" and said the sales were satisfactory.

However, the sales fell in real terms — after inflation.

Sales also dropped 32 per cent in the second half of the year from the robust first half, because of the international economic climate and the Gulf crisis, the organisation said. It said it curtailed diamond supplies as a result.

"Broadly speaking, we feel that's pretty good, considering what's happening," said Bill Lear, a director of the London-based organisation. "But it is clearly a real drop."

Officials for what is formally known as De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd. said the outlook was uncertain, because of the continuing Middle East turmoil — which has undermined

consumer confidence by propelling oil prices, and thus inflation, higher.

However, the new 10 per cent luxury tax that went into effect in the United States on Jan. 1 won't have a large effect, one diamond expert predicted.

The Central Selling Organisation markets 80 per cent of the world's diamond production, which comes to about 100 million carats a year.

1990 was a second less-than-glorious year. Sales fell two per cent in 1989, after large gains of 35 per cent in 1988 and 19 per cent in 1987.

The recession in the United States had a big impact in 1990, said Martin Rapaport, who produces the New York-based Rapaport Diamond Industry newsletter.

The United States, the world's largest diamond consumer, buys about a third of all polished stones set in diamond jewelry, De Beers says.

"The United States market is a major problem," Rapaport said. "We're sitting here with

rising unemployment, the U.S. is in a recession, a war is about to break out.

"The psychology of the consumer is imperative when you're dealing with non-necessities," he said. "People are not in the mood to go out and buy a nice sexy piece of jewelry."

Rapaport also cited higher worldwide interest rates.

The overall sales also were hurt by the volatile Japanese stock market, Van Eeghen said.

Because of the overall softer market, the organisation raised rough diamond prices just 5.5 per cent in 1990, compared with 15.5 per cent in the previous year.

The cartel says it seeks long-term stability and prosperity for the industry. By stockpiling diamonds during downturns, it avoids price fluctuations that it says would undermine public confidence in the value of the precious gems.

De Beers hasn't reduced prices since it began announcing prices in 1964.

Asked about the yen's exchange rate against the U.S. dollar, Kyodo said, 52 per cent

World Bank lends China \$168 million

WASHINGTON (AP) — The World Bank has announced \$168.4 million in loans to improve living conditions in three Chinese cities.

President George Bush has urged the bank to lend to China only for basic human needs. The United States has the largest share of votes among the 351 governments that own the bank.

The help will go to Changzhou, in eastern China near Shanghai, and to Louyang and Shashi in the central part of the country. Louyang has a population of over a million; Changzhou about 600,000 and Shashi about 300,000, bank officials said.

Barbara Clay, a press officer at the U.S. Treasury, declined to say how the U.S. representative voted. One official, who asked

not to be quoted, said the American had abstained.

The bank, the biggest source of aid loans to the Third World, has slowed its lending to China since the tanks went into Tiananmen Square to put down the movement toward democracy.

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Buy Sell

	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	665.0	669.0
Pound Sterling	1267.9	1275.5
Deutschmark	435.1	437.7
Swiss franc	520.8	523.9
French franc	128.1	129.9
Japanese yen (for 100)	496.5	499.5
Dutch guilder	386.0	388.3
Swedish krona	116.8	117.5
Italian lira (for 100)	57.9	58.2
Belgian franc (for 10)	211.3	212.6

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Baker: Lithuania crackdown endangers U.S.-Soviet ties

ANKARA (R) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said Sunday that Moscow's use of force in Lithuania would endanger the U.S.-Soviet partnership.

In a tough statement issued to reporters on his plane Baker said: "It's hard for me... to understand how force can be used, especially now, to suppress newly emerging democratic institutions."

Baker said he was deeply disturbed and saddened by the reported death of 13 people killed by Soviet troops and tanks in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius.

"Enduring our U.S.-Soviet cooperation, indeed partnership, depends on continued reform — for partnership is impossible in the absence of shared values," Baker said in a statement handed to reporters as he landed in Ankara.

Baker said the use of force by the Soviet government "fundamentally and tragically contradicts the basic principles of perestroika, glasnost and democratisation."

"Perestroika is based on the rule of law, not rule by force," Baker said.

Senate rebukes Gorbachev

In Washington, the U.S. Senate has adopted a resolution calling on Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to refrain from "unacceptable coercive tactics" against the Baltic republics.

The resolution was adopted early Saturday, several hours be-

fore residents in the capital of Lithuania reported that gunfire erupted, tanks were seen roaring down city streets and the separatist republic's radio and television went off the air early Sunday.

The Senate vote came during a break in a debate on President George Bush's request for authority to use force against Iraq. There was no recorded vote on the Soviet resolution.

The resolution, sponsored by Senate Republican leader Robert Dole, Democratic leader George Mitchell and Democrat Bill Bradley, stated that Moscow had deployed troops in Lithuania and had begun to use force to impose its rule.

It called on Gorbachev "to refrain from further use of coercive tactics against the democratically elected governments of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia."

NATO discusses Lithuania

In Brussels, NATO allies met in emergency session Sunday to discuss the Soviet crackdown in Lithuania, alliance sources said.

The sources told Reuters senior officials from all 16 Western allies had met Saturday and were meeting again Sunday.

"Firing at people with machine-guns is not exactly what the West wants," said one NATO source, who asked not to be identified. "The time for silence is over."

Both NATO and the European Community last week urged Moscow not to use force

or intimidation in the Baltic republics, which want to break away from Soviet rule.

EC condemns crackdown

In Luxembourg, the European Community (EC) Sunday strongly condemned the Soviet military intervention in rebel Lithuania and demanded an explanation.

Luxembourg, which currently holds the rotating EC presidency, said in a statement:

"With consternation we learned of the bloody events that took place last night in Vilnius... in the name of the Community and its member states, the presidency strongly condemns the use of force."

The presidency is waiting for explanations from Soviet authorities," it said.

The EC particularly wants an explanation "about the authorities who gave the order to fire on unarmed civilians," the statement said.

Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens said the EC should reconsider its billion-dollar aid package to the Soviet Union.

"We must explain clearly to the Soviet Union that our aid is conditional," Eyskens told Belgian Television. "We have a means of pressure," he said, adding that the aid programme may be reviewed.

The Community has pledged and already started to deliver emergency food and medical aid to alleviate the Soviet Union's

economic crisis. It has also promised technical aid.

Eyskens said he was especially shocked by the crackdown since Gorbachev had said last week force would not be used.

"This is a worrying setback," he said, adding that it went some way to explaining the resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze — after warning that the country was heading for dictatorship.

"If this threatens the process of democratisation, we in the European Community will be faced with the question of whether we will be able to maintain our cooperation," Eyskens said.

Germany expresses concern

In Germany, the Foreign Ministry summoned the Soviet ambassador late Saturday to express concern at a "worrying escalation" in the Lithuanian crisis, a ministry spokesman said Sunday.

The spokesman told Reuters that Bonn was concerned at overnight events in the rebel Baltic republic where at least 13 people died and over 100 were injured when Soviet troops stormed the radio and television centre in Vilnius.

Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher was in constant touch with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas and the German Foreign Ministry had set up a special unit to follow developments in Lithuania, the spokesman added.

Tanks drive over crowds in Vilnius

VILNIUS (R) — Doctor Yelena Bezzetskaya held up the passport of the man whose abdomen had been crushed by a Soviet tank roaring through the streets of Lithuania's capital.

Then, her face grim and drawn, she pounded her fist into her lap and burst into tears.

"If I were a young person, I would never serve the state again, not as a doctor not as anything," she said.

Lithuanian officials say 11 people were killed and more than 100 injured when Soviet troops backed by tanks stormed the breakaway republic's main television and radio station in the early hours Sunday.

Later, rows of soldiers illuminated by searchlights stood on a rise next to the city's occupied television tower, their work completed two hours after tanks raced straight at young people massed five metres deep to protect the installation.

Around the tower, on the western edge of Vilnius, I watched as thousands of pro-independence Lithuanians rallied around tanks shaking their fists and screaming abuse at the troops who fired volleys after volleys into the air.

Dozens of injured people were loaded into ambulances, their cries of pain almost drowned out by the roar of tank motors and the crackle of submachine-guns as soldiers fired into the air.

"I thought at first I would be a hero and stand my ground and that they wouldn't run me down," 38-year-old Antanas

Sakalauskas, both his legs crushed, said from a hospital bed.

"The tank tracks went over both my legs. I'm sure there were about four other people underneath. People screamed for the tanks to stop but they drove straight on."

Not all Vilnius residents de-

nounced the army action — notably members of the vocal Russian minority generally opposed to Lithuanian independence.

"There's nothing wrong with what they're doing," said a middle-aged Russian who answered my knock in an apartment building near the tower only to slam it in my face. "They have to restore order. The Lithuanians were getting it all wrong."

Steponaitis Rumos, one of 11 guards manning positions inside the tower, said he knew of only three people who got out safely.

They smashed the windows

and suddenly the soldiers just jumped in and fired everywhere into the crowd," he said. "I saw at least two dead."

Pungent tear-gas billowed

through the cobbled streets of the town. One light truck was

reduced to a tangled mass of metal after colliding with a tank.

Western correspondents were

manhandled by troops and much

of their equipment confiscated.

A cameraman for Britain's

ITN was frogmarched into the

tower but later released. A

crewmember of the U.S. NBC

network was thrown against a

wall by five paratroopers.

"Occupiers bastards" young

men

screamed at the crowd and the battle was

launched to clear the perimeter around the tower," he said. "No one knows what they did inside the tower."



More 'masterpieces' appear since Van Gogh discovery

CHICAGO (AP) — Set off by the discovery of a previously un-

known painting by Dutch master Vincent Van Gogh, calls are pour-

ing in to an auction house by

people convinced that they, too,

have an old master's work tucked

away in their closet. A Florida

man called to say he had several

Van Goghs, a Rembrandt and a

Da Vinci, I think," said Leslie

Hindman, whose auction house is

March 11 to sell a Van Gogh found

in a Wisconsin couple's home.

"He's sending photos, but you

know, it's kind of silly," she said.

"We've had calls from people who

think they have Renoir, Monet,

"They're really funny: 'I'm not

going to tell you anything. I'm not

going to tell you where I live,'" Hindman said. The Van Gogh

authenticated by Dutch autho-

rities may bring about \$500,000 at

auction, even though it is consid-

ered to be a minor work, Hind-

man said. It is owned by a sub-

urban Milwaukee couple who

asked not to be identified. Hind-

man said she plans to check all of

the calls she is now receiving.

Marcos paintings fetch top prices

NEW YORK (AP) — Paintings by El Greco and Raphael fetched

the top prices at an auction of old

master paintings once owned by

the late Philippine President Fer-

dinand Marcos and his wife, Im-

elda, auctioneers said. The sale

realised 15.4 million, well above

the estimate of \$10 million,

said Susan Brittan, a spokes-

woman for Christie's auction

house, earlier. The Marcoses' for-

mer collection of antique silver

brought nearly 5 million. "Across

the board, there were excellent

prices," she said. All 98 paint-

ings sold. Seventy-four of the paint-

ings were put on the auction block by

the Philippine government, the

rest by the U.S. government. El

Greco's oval oil painting, titled

The Coronation of the Virgin, was

bought by an anonymous bidder for

\$2.3 million. The Justice Depart-

ment seized the El Greco and

Raphael paintings in 1987 in France

from Saudi financier Adnan

Khashoggi during an investigation

that led to the indictment of

Khashoggi and the Marcoses.

'86 camaro tops list of most stolen vehicles

DETROIT (R) — For the fourth

year running, the 1986 Chevrolet

Camaro has won the dubious

honour of most-stolen car in the

United States, according to an

insurance valuation company.

CCC Information Services Inc. of Chicago said in its annual

listing of most frequently stolen

vehicles that the 1988 Hyundai

Excel GL jumped from 10th on

last year's list to no. 4 this year,

making it the bloodiest year since the insur-

gence began in 1982. At least 140

people have been killed this

month.

On Saturday, UNI and PTT

reported 12 people died since

Friday night in Punjab. The re-

ports which quoted the police in

Chandigarh, 240 kilometres north

of New Delhi, said the deaths

occurred in eight incidents in

several parts of the state.

Sikh separatists claim mem-

bers of their faith are discriminated

culturally and politically by the

Hindu-dominated government.